



KEP GARDENS NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2012

Hi Everyone,

Career Students Programme

We had a parent, teacher, student meeting at the end of November. At the meeting it was agreed by all that we would meet every two months to discuss the students' progress.

It was encouraging to see all the parents attend, especially the 2 fathers (2 of the students fathers have died). All took an active role in the meeting.



A couple of interesting points emerged:

1) The students' foundation knowledge of the subjects is poor. The students admitted that they hadn't studied very hard previously because what was the point. Even if they won a scholarship from the Government they could not accept as their families could not afford to support them living away from home. Now they are working so hard to make up for lost time as they have hope to realize their dreams.

2) Our experience in Cambodia has been that normally nobody does anything for nothing. Payment is expected for the smallest thing but the students have also been attending the private lessons at school (which only last 3 months or so) without being charged a fee by the teachers. Imagine how happy we were to hear this as it shows that the teachers we chose are also committed to helping the students achieve success.

**GLOBAL GIVING ENDS ON
DECEMBER 31ST FOR AMERICAN
SUPPORTERS.**



A great team has emerged from this led by Sarak who was a chemistry and physics teacher himself but now works in the Education Department primarily training primary teachers. He, his father and 2 of his brothers are teachers. Education is an important part of their family life. Although he can speak English reasonably well he attends English classes to improve his written English. He has taken on the role of co-ordinator of this project on a voluntary basis. It is important to him that this pilot year succeeds in its aims so it will continue in the future. He has high expectations of the students, teachers and parents and all have no problem working together to achieve his high standards. It is working, everyone is happy and working harder.

We could not run this project so effectively without him due to the language barrier but also his understanding of the Cambodian psyche. He keeps everyone motivated and on their toes.

So much more has come out of this project than 4 students given education opportunities. It is proving that Cambodian people can and will work hard together to achieve something they believe in if given initial direction and financial help. It is a great learning process for all involved and an example of self help when given an opportunity.

We have many opportunities open to us in the Western world regardless of financial standing. In Third World countries they don't, more so in rural areas, and it is gratifying to see a group of people, some illiterate, some educated, joining together to make it happen. OK, only 4 students will benefit this year but the students' success will benefit many people in a rippling effect throughout their family, community and country.

Donors should feel very proud of their contribution

to this project. Don't underestimate the gratitude the students and their families feel for the donors. They cannot express in words how much they appreciate their support but show it in the way they work hard 6 days a week to achieve success to justify the support given to them. Slowly but surely through projects such as Kep Gardens and the Career Student Programme the country will grow and people's everyday struggle to survive will ease. Donors are part of this gradual change by their kind donation.

Meanwhile, the teachers prepare detailed reports on each student every month. We will send a precise of these each month to donors so they can follow the students' progress and share with them any interesting points that arise from the bi-monthly combined meetings.

MANY, MANY THANKS TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONATED TO THIS PROJECT

HOPE TO HEAR FROM OTHERS WHO MAY LIKE TO JOIN WITH US. TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Driver Safety

A few more young people have died on the roads recently. Most people in the rural areas do not have a driving licence and haven't learnt any rules of the road (hence the sense of no rules that visitors get). We organized for a senior police official who is also a respected person in the community, to give a talk to our two older classes on driver safety. Hopefully they took heed of his words. We will probably do it again later in the school year and add a bit of practical training into it as well. This was really just a trial to see who we could get and how they would handle it.



A big thank you to Donna and Michael Tasker who visited recently and brought over bits and pieces for the children. A teacher friend of theirs had sent some paints and plasticine. Three of the classes had a great time. Most of the children had never used paints before and I noticed some putting the brush into the paint, putting the brush into the water and then trying to paint with it. They had never seen plasticine before either. Loved it! We are doing words for body parts at the moment so they will have a great time next week adding the bits that I call out eg "Give the boy/girl "3" legs"! Unfortunately they can't paint them and then keep them to take home as we need to keep the plasticine for another time.



Donna and Michael also brought over some thick work socks for Andrew. He's in heaven!

Thank you also to Helena who I caught up with in Phnom Penh. Helena was over on a working trip and also brought over various bits and pieces. The volleyball net is a great hit thanks Helena.



Tita's pig



Good to see more people checking out the Kep Gardens Facebook page.

Signatures

We finally got an appointment to see the new Provincial Governor about signing our papers. He asked a lot of questions about Kep Gardens and agreed to sign this paper straight away. Problem is, they had lost the papers. Actually they hadn't as they "found" them in someone's office a couple of days later. So now we are waiting to see him again for his signature. He also agreed to sign the other 3 approval papers eg building plans, school approval, road signs as soon as they were ready. Off to the City Governor now to continue with these 3 signings as he wouldn't sign them until this hard title change was approved by the state government. The light at the end of the tunnel is growing bigger!

We were thinking of going away for a week over the Christmas break but due to a few things that have to be done we will probably just go into Phnom Penh for a couple of days to enjoy hot showers and European meals 3 times a day. We will have lunch at Kep Gardens with the staff on Christmas Day itself and on the 1st of January we have some friends from Australia coming to stay. During this time we are all off to Prey Veng where Sothea is getting married. Be good to catch up with his family.



WE WISH YOU ALL A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS AND MAY 2013 BRING YOU HEALTH AND HAPPINESS.

Cheers, Janine and Andrew

We have added another student, Sok Tann, to our Career Student Programme.



Tann's father died in a moto accident about 10 years ago. There are 3 children in his family. Although he had worked very hard at English class and attended regularly for the past year we did not choose him originally because we thought he was already receiving some help but have since found out this is not the case. His mother sells touristy shell bracelets etc at Kep Beach so she has a small, irregular income. Tann wants to be a doctor but says that he cannot spend the years it will take with no income to support his studies or his family. He will also train to be a nurse as he wants a career in health in some capacity. Despite his many responsibilities at home being the only male in the family he kept attending to improve his chances of employment at the end of this year. He often looked tired but was determined to succeed.

